

We claim:

1. A transceiver for two-way data communication via satellite, the transceiver comprising

a forward link manager for managing data communication in a first direction via satellites in geostationary orbit, and

a return link manager for managing data communication in a second direction via satellites in a below geostationary orbit.

2. A transceiver according to claim 1, wherein said forward link manager is additionally able to manage data communication in said first direction via satellites in said below geostationary orbit.

3. A transceiver according to claim 2, wherein said forward link manager comprises a selector for selecting between satellites in geostationary orbit and satellites in below geostationary orbit based on a content type of the data to be transmitted.

4. A transceiver according to claim 3, wherein said selector is operable to select satellites in below geostationary orbit for data having content types including any one of a group comprising voice, messaging, and control

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signaling, and selecting satellites in geostationary orbit for data having other content types.

5. A transceiver according to claim 1 wherein satellites in below geostationary orbit comprise satellites in medium earth orbit and satellites in low earth orbit.

6. A transceiver according to claim 1, further operable to transmit and receive data using the Internet Protocol.

7. A transceiver according to claim 1, operable to maintain an Internet link.

8. A transceiver according to claim 1, wherein said first direction is a generally data heavy direction and said second direction is a generally data light direction.

9. An electronic terminal associated with a two-way satellite transceiver for connecting said terminal to an electronic network, the transceiver comprising a receiver for receiving data via a connection to a satellite in geostationary orbit and a transmitter for sending data via a satellite in a lower than geostationary orbit.

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10. An electronic terminal according to claim 9, wherein said receiver is additionally operable to receive data via satellites in said below geostationary orbit.

11. An electronic terminal according to claim 9, wherein satellites in below geostationary orbit comprise satellites in medium earth orbit and satellites in low earth orbit.

12. An electronic terminal according to claim 9, wherein said transceiver is operable to transmit and receive data using the Internet Protocol.

13. An electronic terminal according to claim 9, wherein said transceiver is operable to maintain an Internet link.

14. A method of maintaining a data link from an electronic network to a remote terminal, the method comprising

sending data to said remote terminal via at least one satellite in geostationary orbit, and

receiving data from said terminal via at least one satellite in a lower than geostationary orbit.

15. A method according to claim 14 further comprising sending data having a predetermined data type to said remote terminal via said at least one satellite in a lower than geostationary orbit.

16. A method according to claim 15 wherein said predetermined data type includes at least voice, messaging and control signaling.

17. A method according to claim 14, wherein satellites in below geostationary orbit comprise satellites in medium earth orbit and satellites in low earth orbit.

18. A method according to claim 14, wherein sending and receiving of data is carried out using the Internet Protocol.

19. A method of maintaining a data link from a terminal to a remote electronic network, the method comprising

receiving data from said remote electronic network via at least one satellite in geostationary orbit, and

sending data to said remote electronic network via at least one satellite in a lower than geostationary orbit.

20. A method according to claim 19, wherein satellites in below geostationary orbit comprise satellites in medium earth orbit and satellites in low earth orbit.

21. A method according to claim 19, wherein sending and receiving of data is carried out using the Internet Protocol.

22. A method according to claim 19, further comprising sending data having a predetermined data type to said remote terminal via said at least one satellite in a lower than geostationary orbit.

23. A method according to claim 22, wherein said predetermined data type includes at least voice, messaging and control signaling.